

# Acyclovir

ay-SYE-kloe-veer

**Brand Name:** Zovirax



Acyclovir, also known as Zovirax, is a type of medicine called an antiviral. Antivirals kill viruses or stop viruses from multiplying. Acyclovir is used to treat herpes virus infections spread by direct skin-to-skin contact. These infections include herpes simplex (HSV-1, which causes cold sores most commonly found on the lips, mouth, nose, chin, or cheeks), genital herpes (HSV-2, which causes genital sores), and herpes zoster (which causes chickenpox in children and shingles in adults). Studies suggest that sores or lesions in the genital area make a person more prone to HIV infection if they have sex with someone infected with HIV. This may be because sores create breaks in the skin of the genitals and make it easier for HIV to get into the body. Herpesviruses can also be opportunistic infections in people with HIV/AIDS. Acyclovir will not cure herpes infections, but it may help keep the infections under control.

## HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

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Acyclovir is approved by the FDA for use in the treatment of genital herpes and other herpes simplex infections, as well as herpes zoster infections (shingles) caused by varicella-zoster virus, the virus that causes chickenpox. This medicine does not cure or prevent herpes infection or HIV infection and does not reduce the risk of passing these viruses to other people.

## Dosage Information

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Acyclovir comes in oral (capsule, tablet, or suspension), intravenous, and topical forms. The oral forms can be taken with or without food.

## Contraindications

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Individuals should tell a doctor about any medical problems before taking this medicine.

## Possible Side Effects

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Along with its desired effects, acyclovir can cause some unwanted effects. Serious side effects of this medicine include swelling or redness at the injection site (for intravenous form) and acute kidney failure. Individuals should tell a doctor if they have symptoms of any of these side effects.

Other side effects may not be serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use of the medicine. Less serious side effects of this medicine include nausea or vomiting, general feeling of sickness, diarrhea, headache, and lightheadedness. Individuals should tell a doctor if these side effects continue or are bothersome.

## Drug and Food Interactions

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A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), or herbal medications.

## Clinical Trials

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For information on clinical trials that involve Acyclovir, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Acyclovir AND HIV Infections.

## Manufacturer Information

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Acyclovir  
GlaxoSmithKline  
5 Moore Drive  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709  
(888) 825-5249

Zovirax  
GlaxoSmithKline  
5 Moore Drive  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709  
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## For More Information

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Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health Information Specialist:

- Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET
- Via Live Help: [http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live\\_help](http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help) Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET